



Convergence: Smart Phone

Cell Phone, SMS and Social Media

The hand-held “device”, or “gadget”, such as the one illustrated above, is more than a cell phone. It delivers Internet, e-Mail, other kinds of instant messaging including SMS, plus GPS, still and video camera, sound recording, spreadsheet, word processing, and hundreds or even thousands of other “applications”. It probably delivers live television efficiently as well.

The long-predicted “convergence” has arrived.

We cannot say that this is the end of the road. There may be more surprising things coming along. But what we can already say is that the technical ease of doing any kind of communication has only exposed the social and human nature of such communication.

The barriers to communication are now revealed as principally human ones, starting with the time it takes to do things. We all have the power, but we do not have the time, to do more than a fraction of what is possible.

Working together, we could do more. But working together requires organisation. We do organise, and we do succeed to work together to a large extent, in politics.

But when it comes to ICT (Information and Communication Technology), we now have the solo device, like the one shown above, and we have as yet, rather limited collaboration.

Collaboration on monopoly's terms is not collaboration for revolution

Instead of the widespread mass creativity that caused the very rapid advance of ICT, what monopoly brings is widespread mass conformity.

The phone and the SMS allow certain patterns of communication, but not others. The one that is conducive to political dialogue, it does not allow, or at least, it inhibits. The model for such a dialogue is “many-to-many”.

It is not “one-to-one”, like a telephone call, and it is not “one-to-many”, like a radio or television broadcast.

“Many-to-many” is the revolutionary possibility that the new devices bring. In this relationship, it is possible for all the participants to be equally as much producers as they are consumers. This is the model of communism. It is a model of post-capitalist relations of production.

What is the response of bourgeois society to this possibility, of its own creation? The response is a combination of paternalism and filialism (i.e. the corporate monopolies behave like parents while the consumers are treated like, and behave like, children). This is done through the creation of Facebook, Twitter, and the minor “social networking” platforms.

The characteristic of Facebook and Twitter and the whole so-called “social networking” idea is the opposite of what it holds itself out to be. This is precisely not the model of communism. In the world of “social networking” all revolutionary possibilities are neutralised and frustrated.

This is so, regardless of the existence of a US Imperialism “PRISM” system that is collecting all communications, including the “social networking” interactions. With or without the intruding “PRISM”, social networking is counter-revolutionary. It is a dummy. It is sterile and cannot bear fruit.

Our Agitprop has to be the intentional antagonist of bourgeois, counter-revolutionary ICT. Our job is to produce as many creators as we can, meaning not only writers, but also visual artists, makers and performers of all kinds, as well as people who can master the more difficult parts of ICT.

- The above is the third of three introductory texts that are compiled into a printable booklet, [Groups, Blogs, Web Sites, Multi-Media and the Universal Device](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).